Will Reborn

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Will Reborn

by Sparcina

Summary

AU Season 3. Will is very sick. The prognosis is so bad, actually, that the doctors expect him to die within the year.
But Hannibal Lecter is not so pessimistic and flies back to America. In order to save Will, he will abduct him, and gift him with the final version of their shattered teacup.

That Doctor

Will hated hospitals.

It wasn't a white-hot hate like the one he had felt for Garett Jacob Hobbs; it was passive, deep distaste settled within him, a habit of sort that he had kept for years without ever feeling the need for change. What was there to like in a hospital, anyway? The always-more-tired doctors who probed and pocked at him, stuck all sorts of instruments under his skin, literally and metaphorically? The nurses who tried for small talk at every turn? The disgusting food? Will wasn't overly difficult with what he ate, sometimes going days before noticing he should fill his stomach, but since he had met... since he was...

Better not to think too much about him.

Will sighed and took another sip of his dust-tasting coffee. He had better enjoy it while he still could drink and eat like a normal human being. Soon, the doctors say, he wouldn't be able to anymore. Too painful. Unpractical.

Will threw the empty coffee cup against the wall. A few brown drops splashed on the white floor, and somehow the liquid looked like old blood on a million tired footprints.

He missed Alana, and not only because she always took great care of his dogs, whom he missed, too. In spite of his role in his nightmare variation, he also missed Jack. Both of them, however, were also in the hospital, albeit not the same one. Of course not. They were going to go home soon, both of them, while he, on the other hand, would have to...

Will clenched his fists in the sweat-perfumed sheets. Ever since his admission in the hospital two months ago, when the first... symptoms had appeared, he didn't know what was the most unbearable: the knowledge that he would die no matter what, or the memory of what happened this night at his home.

The surprise, no, the delight at seeing Abigail again.

Their embrace. His arms around him.

The gut-wrenching sensation that he knew of his betrayal.

Then the knife under his ribs. The whirl of fire spreading in his guts, like so many needles focusing everywhere at once. The room that began to spin, and his hands that didn't move, not, yet, and the words that kept ringing in his mind, day and night...

A fresh bead of sweat ran down his cheek. He wiped it away, not wanting to know if it was really sweat or something else.

The door opened. A pale figure clad in a white coat entered.

"Mr. Graham, how are you feeling this morning?"

Will closed briefly his eyes.

OoO

This day went by like all the other before: one test after the other, with the same words at sunset.

"I'm sorry."

Will would have preferred silence, but he had learned long ago that human beings felt the need to take the blame for things they weren't responsible for. Like the unexplained foreseeable death of a patient. So he endured it all: the tests, the questions to which he had answers, and the questions to which he didn't, the food, the medicaments.

And the pain. It had started in his belly, right where he had been stabbed. When Will had told the doctors what had happened—an edulcorated version of it, at any rate—the first hypothesis had been poison. So for days, the medical team attached to him had tested him for every kind of poison that a blade could transmit...

As if he would end it in such a way. He... No, not he. Hannibal... yes, Hannibal would want him to die with the sole force of his hand, by his will alone. There relationship would need so clear a cut. There was simply no other ending available for them.

The name, even just in his mind, felt hot. Will turned on his side, fixing his untouched dinner. No poison. No known infection too, bacterial or viral. The doctors were still running tests, of course, but Will knew they wouldn't find anything. He doubted there was a word for what he had, except imminent death. He had accepted it.

The morphine pouch at his head had been taunting him for two weeks now, ever since the pain attacks had begun to make him unconscious. The doctors had berated him for not using it whenever he should, but Will didn't care. He didn't have a job anymore. All purposes had been taken away from him. He was locked up in a white room, alone with his thoughts and nightmares, and this yearning...

A moan left Will's lips without his permission. He locked his lips and bit down on his tongue.

May the pain make his go faster.

OoO

The next day began like usual: a shower now difficult with his atrophied muscles, a tasteless breakfast, a water-diluted coffee, and a series of test.

What was different was the speech at the end of his RMI.

"A doctor from oversea will come to see you tomorrow, Mr. Graham. He has heard of your case and would like to offer his help."

Will draw a deep breath. Pain was bubbling in his chest. Like usual, it had started in his belly, right by the knife's wound, only to spread sinuously through his entire chest. It had now

reached his hands, which would be shaking if he wasn't keeping them under his thighs. He could feel the tremors brushing his thighs. Sweat—there was no doubt it was sweat this time—ran down his spine, cold and uncomfortable. His right hand twitched. His jaw spasmed.

"Have you taken any morphine this morning, Mr. Graham?"

"I did."

"Maybe you should take some more."

Will didn't answer to that. He never did; less strain on his already frail self-control.

"What does he think to accomplish, this Doctor?" he rather asked in a rasped voice.

His doctor, the one he saw the most often, chalk-white and nervous as a mouse, turned away from the sheet of paper spread on his desk and looked straight at him.

"He said he developed a new method to encourage a rebellious organism into a more pliable form."

"That sounds esoteric."

"It is a vague explanation, but I don't want to burden you with details."

"In case it doesn't work again," Will whispered.

"Yes."

Will was brought back to his room. He sank in his bed as soon as the door was closed and looked up at the sickly-white ceiling. In spite of his silent prayer, it didn't suddenly disappear to show the sky.

OoO

He dreamt of Hannibal again. Like most of his dreams involving him, it took place in his former office, with the both of them sitting on a chair facing each other. When he woke up, Will didn't remember the words exchanged, but the sensations clung to his skin with the natural adhesion of skin.

With a hand on the wall to support his weight, he limped to the window.

It rained. The angry grey clouds, monstrous, enormous, hung in the blitzing sky, seemingly unmoving and satisfied to tower over humanity. Will wondered if Hannibal would have said it was proper. Human beings, after all, were very small on the scale of Earth, let alone of the universe.

Will lifted a hand to the window. It still held traces of his fingers from previous days of contemplation. He wiped at the condensation and observed his face. How old he looked. How tired. He didn't want to see any new doctor. The one that had made him sick, not too long ago, however...

Did he want to see him? Will studied his flipping stomach for a clue, but was left with confusion. Even thousands of miles away from him, probably on a killing spread, Hannibal Lecter overwhelmed him.

The pain attack started at the moment the door opened.

Will stilled in spite of the raging fire storming inside him. Was it the carefully designed sound of footsteps, the sound of layers of expensive fabrics, the intake of breath, so quiet and still so loud? Will didn't know, but he knew.

"Hello, William."

Black drank up Will's vision. His knees bucked, and before they could hit the ground, strong hands came to support him.

"I'm very pleased to see you are still alive."

OoO

Will woke up with the feeling that a car had run over him. This sensation was familiar, with the pain attacks increasing in frequency and intensity, but what didn't register as normalcy was the odor surrounding him.

Antiseptics. But not the ones he was used to. When he opened his eyes, after many failed attempts, he saw why his nose gave him different inputs.

He was not in the hospital anymore.

"Good morning, Will."

That voice... Will's blurred vision finished to clear as an achingly beautiful face—there was no point denying it—appeared, surrounded by a bright halo. Artificial light. Without any conscious decision on his part, his right hand emerged from under the sheets—silk, he noticed absent-mindedly—and rose to meet the vision before his fluttering eyes. Those high cheekbones, those piercing maroon eyes, this mouth carved for lies and secrets, but also for the most amazing truths ever carried by the universe... The contact of his fingertips against the soft cheek electrified him.

"Have you slept well, Will?" Hannibal asked.

He was wearing a three-piece ensemble, like usual. Something like a laugh escaped Will's throat.

"How can you..." He cleared his throat. "Why are you here?" That was the most important question, he decided.

"I want to take care of you."

Will listened to the words twice, analyzing them. They sounded like the truth, but they also held something of a lie. He turned his head, searching for the glass of water that the nurse

normally left on the side table, only to remember he wasn't in the hospital anymore.

"Here."

Hannibal handed him a glass of water. Will drank it down slowly, not wanting to choke like the other day.

"Where am I?" He gave Hannibal the glass back. When their fingers touched, Will couldn't say if Hannibal let it happen or placed his hand on purpose.

Amusement flickered in the maroon eyes.

"You are where you ought to be, my dear William."

"And that would be in your care?"

Will tried to sit up, but Hannibal's hand was here at once, forcing him to lie down. Will felt strange all of a sudden. The hand that had stabbed him, right over its wound.

"Do you want to see it?"

"May I see it?"

They had spoken at the same time. Hannibal's lips curled into a warm smile.

"I would gladly see my work, yes."

The way he said 'my work' didn't help Will to calm down. He didn't spend too much time pondering over it and raised his shirt a few inches.

"You didn't mean to kill me, did you?"

Hannibal didn't answer; he didn't need to. His fingers felt cold against the scar, and Will felt feverish. He was half-relieved, half-frustrated, when Hannibal took them back.

"I am sorry you fell sick in my absence."

Will snorted, then felt silent. The next words crossed his throat with something akin to pain.

"I thought you would never come back."

"How could I?" Hannibal's thumb brushed the scar line. Will's insides churned. A scar line. His car line, by Hannibal. With every second ticking, it became more of a life line.

Where had this though come from?

"I don't think I can cure you," Hannibal said quietly, matter-of-factly. "But I do believe I can salvage what you are. This is... too unique to loose."

Will licked his lips. His mind was blank.

"How can you salvage and not cure?"

Hannibal didn't answer, or rather, the needle in Will's armpit did.

Black, so black...

"You will see, Will. Do you see?"

AN : In the next chapter, Hannibal begins his experiment... which is in way to Will's taste. Or is it?

A Very Special Design

Pain roused him, but not the pain of some incurable illness. Will lifted his hands to rub at his eyes, only to feel the restraints cutting his motion halfway. A sinking feeling uncurled in his stomach. Were these really handcuffs on his wrists? And what was keeping his ankles stuck to the mattress if not something disgustingly similar?

Most importantly, why was he kept in this state? What had happened during the night? Had he struck at Hannibal or tried to kill himself or something equally…

"I hope you don't mind your current position, but I fear you are in no state to take care of yourself."

Hannibal's smooth voice put his train of thoughts to a stop. Will felt thrown overboard his own brain, and it was not a nice impression.

"Am I your prisoner, Dr. Lecter?" His tongue was parched, his throat dry, the words edgy like snakes.

Hannibal turned on the light. He looked as composed as always, with his hair slicked back in what ought to be the European fashion, his features seemingly hard and unmoving as alabaster, and his eyes two pools of endless black matter ready to annihilate enmity—or nourish it, if need be. He was wearing a different three-piece ensemble than yesterday, blue and black instead of pearl grey.

"Don't be rude, William, or I shall punish you."

"How could you possibly punish me more than you already have?"

Hannibal arched an eyebrow, looking genuinely startled by the accusation.

"I am not punishing you," he said, clasping his hands in front of him as if to show there was nothing up his sleeve. "What I do is called salvation."

"Do you plan to save me like you saved Abigail?!"

Will had all but forgotten the guilty joy of seeing the man again. His heart was not pumping blood in his veins, but a raw, scorching anger, that invested him with a force he hadn't felt in weeks, much like the poison of heroin in a first-timer system. He began to struggle against the handcuffs, hard and unrelenting. His skin turned delicate by illness rapidly broke and bled.

"You are going to hurt yourself."

The chiding tone only enraged Will further. He tried to keep some distance between Hannibal and him, but the other man could do as he pleased and did just that, cupping his cheek and locking their gazes together.

"You killed Abigail!" Will spat.

"You rejected the family I offered you."

"You killed her!"

"The first teacup shattered," Hannibal replied calmly, but with a flicker of something incredibly dangerous in his eyes. His thumb dug into Will's cheek, the nail scratching the surface of his skin. Possessive. Assertive. Dominant. "A family has died, but have no fear, Will: we will be family."

"I will die before that!"

"Maybe," Hannibal answered cryptically. "But our family is already growing."

Will followed the maroon eyes as they settled on a cubic form besides the bed. He supposed it was some kind of machine that monitored his vital signs. Why else would he be hooked to it? He took a closer look at the transparent fluid flowing into his veins—or was it out? His curiosity dampened his anger.

"Are you giving me morphine?"

"Do you need some?"

Will shuddered at the humor scintillating in Hannibal's eyes. The thumb on his cheek stopped to dig and began to trace little circles instead, so slowly—it would have been called tender had it been any other man—Will's breath hitched.

"No," he stuttered. "No..."

He managed to swallow back his gratitude. Hannibal noticed it and stood up, letting his cheek feeling cold at the loss. Will tried to organize his thoughts.

"So I am restrained for my own good, is that it?" He sounded desperate and he hated it.

"Yes. For your own good." Again that flicker of amusement, as if the man was enjoying a private joke.

Will's mouth turned to a thin line. The stubble on his jaw was already bothering him.

"How am I to use the toilet then? And shower?"

He didn't like the answer one bit.

The routine in the white room replaced the routine at the hospital.

The food was better: that was one of the upsides, the main one some days. Hannibal prepared his every meal with a special care for his silent desire, for he often found fish in the porcelain plates. There was still red meat, of course—it was Hannibal we were talking about—and Will didn't doubt one instant that it was human, but he still ate it, because there would be no point

in starving himself. He might have considered this avenue a couple of weeks ago, but now that Hannibal was proving interesting once again...

Will pushed back his plate abruptly, not even wincing when it landed on the floor and broke. The food might be good here, it might be divine, he was still in a prison, and treated like a...

It was just so humiliating. Will didn't believe the extremely weak version of himself Hannibal kept presenting to him: it was just a base and vile justification to strap him to a bed with silky sheets until he became as weak as a lamb without any artifice. Hannibal refused to give him coffee, and Will would bet his left hand that Hannibal gave him drugs to sleep through that tube hooked to his arm. And not just at night.

But that wasn't the worst of his ordeal. Will stiffened at the sight of his meal scattered on the otherwise impeccable floor; it looked like his knotted stomach whenever Hannibal brought him to the bathroom.

"I will take care of all your needs, Will."

That was what Hannibal had said on that first day, and he had been true to his word.

Will couldn't even begin to put into words how disturbing the whole experience was. It was bad enough that Hannibal exerted complete control over him: he had to turn his most basic needs into dreaded moments as well.

Will wasn't allowed to stand—his treatment would suffer from it, Hannibal insisted. This inhuman constraint left him with no other choice than to empty his bladder and intestines through means of Hannibal's choosing, which turned out to be filters and nappies.

Nappies.

"I can stand!" Will had screamed at him the first time Hannibal had taken out his pants to put on the nappy. "I won't run!"

"I know you won't; you can't," had been Hannibal's calm and oh-so-reasonable reply.

Will had been so ashamed he had cried. When Hannibal had come to change his nappy a few hours later—he had come in-between, but Will had been so adamant and vocal at staying alone that he had retreated, probably to the kitchen—Will had done his best to ignore him.

It had been impossible, of course. New tears of humiliation had trailed down Will's cheeks as Hannibal had wiped his cheeks clean of intestine creations, but Hannibal hadn't say a word as he had worked smoothly and efficiently, like the professional he was. As a matter of fact, he hadn't even talked to him until a new nappy was in place and the tears dry on Will's cheeks.

"You have sweated a lot."

"You think?"

Hannibal had begun to wash his face with the softest clothe, ignoring Will's tart reply.

"Will?"

Will's attention snapped back to the present, where a hurt-looking Hannibal was staring at the reliefs of his meal.

"Was the fish not to your taste?"

Will wanted to punch and hug him at the same time. How was it even possible? He didn't hate the man—at least he didn't only hate him, that was the effect the man had on him—but he certainly wouldn't reestablish their friendship anytime soon.

"Tell me what you are giving me," he demanded, raising his hand with the transparent tube.

Hannibal's expression didn't change.

"I try to encourage your organism into a more pliable-"

"I already heard this version. What. Are. You. Giving. Me?!"

"I'm giving you the only life you will have, William."

Will rose as far as his cuffs allowed him and fought against them. He felt so weak, so feeble; he may as well have fought against the whole world. He wanted his dogs. He missed home.

Except Hannibal was home, in a way. The only one to truly understand him, as he, Will, could see under the human guise Hannibal wore like an artist.

He wanted to scream. He did.

"Don't you dare lie to me! You are-"

Hannibal was so fast back in the room, towering over him, that Will's breath caught. A new weakness uncurled in his belly, warm and disturbingly familiar. It tasted like submission.

"You, who tried to sell me to the police, talks to me about lies?" Hannibal hissed.

There was a predatory gleam in his eyes. Will felt very much like the worm at the end of his hook, ready to be ripped apart by the hungry—or/and angry—fish, naturally superior in the food chain. His heart beat furiously against his ribcage as he considered his betrayal, Hannibal's betrayal… their whole relationship, its violence and madness in a loop.

He didn't feel like a worm anymore, but like a dying supernova on the edge of a supermassive black hole.

"I wouldn't..." Will stuttered. He swallowed. His lips parted. When Hannibal leaned over him and touched his wrist, the mere brush of a thumb, his perfume reached Will's nostrils and stayed there, invading his nose, his throat. Will couldn't breathe.

"You have such a delicate skin, Will." Hannibal sat on the edge of the bed and produced a small vial that may have cost a roundtrip to Japan. "You shouldn't struggle so much."

His fingers were so sweet as they healed.

For next two weeks, Will tried to recover some strength. He had a plan, he only needed the motivation and the energy to see it through.

His course set, he tried to let time elapse while unaware. He let Hannibal wash and change him. He ate what he was brought. He requested morphine to dull his uncertainty and received it. He requested barbiturate to sleep and got some. He noticed, however, that Hannibal always injected him with very small quantities, not at all what he would have expected given their prior experience with manipulation. He had still nightmares about that ear.

In the end, the new questions only made Will more determinate.

He estimated he had spent one month in Hannibal's 'room' when the occasion presented itself. As soon as Hannibal left the room, Will took the fork—its first one, but he had been so very good and pliant over the last few days, not even flinching at the change of nappies—and inserted one peak in the hole on his handcuffs.

The peak broke.

"Damn it!" he swore under his breath.

He looked daggers at the cubic form besides the bed. It was so taunting, only out of reach… What would he discover under the sheet covering it? A complex assortment of machines that 'encouraged his body to be more pliable'? A one-of-a-kind monitor that kept track of his thoughts? What did Hannibal really wish to accomplish?

"Will?"

Hannibal closed the door behind him. He looked at his plate, and Will knew, he just knew at once that Hannibal knew what he had been trying to do.

"Will, I must insist that you-"

Adrenaline chased morphine and barbiturate away. Without thinking, Will gripped his right handcuff with his left hand—he couldn't reach the tube near his elbow, but at least he could wrap his numb fingers around his wrist—and hold onto it with dear life as he forced his right wrist out of it.

His thumb snapped and broke, allowing his hand to shot free. Gasping and trembling, Will reached for the sheet and uncovered the cube, exposing the only possibility left in his Schrödinger-like obsession.

"Will!"

Blood rushed in Will's ears as the glass container took over his eyesight. Impossible. Real. It became bigger and brighter until all was left to see was the heart of Hannibal's plan, the lie and the truth inescapable.

A fetus in an artificial placenta.

AN: A slow update (I've just finished writing my second original novel!) but worthwhile I hope, considering how "Dolce" ended. In the next chapter: Hannibal explains his plan of salvation… and didn't he say he would take care of all of Will's "needs"?

Perspectives on Salvation

The incubator was the most beautiful and yet the most horrible thing Will had ever seen, and not only because he was hooked to it. He drew a shaky breath, willing the sight away, but the artificial placenta and the wonder at its center steadfastly refused to vanish.

The hold Hannibal had on his wrist was strong enough to leave bruises. Will's eyes swiveled to his broken thumb, throbbing red in its neglected position. Hannibal sat on the bed but stayed tense as he checked first the tube hooked to his flesh, then the limb he had wounded.

"You could have done much harm just now," he chided in a voice unusually thick with his Lithuanian accent. "This tube is not to be unhooked from your arm."

"You are sick!" Will lashed out, only to fall back on his bed with the blue face of the righteous. The irony of his words wasn't lost on him, since their illnesses, albeit different in nature, were both without a treatment.

The maroon eyes surveyed him coolly, the mind behind them assessing his agitated state, probably to figure out the best way to use it.

"You shouldn't overexert yourself, Will, especially in your new state."

"You impregnated me!" Will roared, not blue anymore, but purple.

"I only-"

"How could you do that?" Even as he asked the question, Will knew it was futile. Why would Hannibal impregnate him in this unheard of and laughable fashion when he had hidden his encephalitis from him, force-feeded him Abigail's ear, arranged for him to be caught as the Chesapeake Ripper, and then stabbed him and cut their surrogate daughter's throat in front of his eyes as he agonized on the floor of a spotless kitchen once filled with human remains? Why indeed. In Hannibal's grand scheme of plans, his impregnation surely made sense on some level.

"Why don't you..." Will chocked on the words, stomach still fragile at the weird concept of his impregnation. Hannibal's free hand, suddenly on his shoulder, was steady and eerily soothing, the inspiration for a conclusion. "... let me be?"

Hannibal didn't blink.

"Because you are the only one to understand who I am."

He reached for his cheek. Will shuddered under the controlled pressure of the surgeon digits, digging just under the cheekbone. He could sense that Hannibal touched him there because he couldn't reach his eyes without gouging them out, not that the idea hadn't brushed his mind, but the man would rather have him staring back with all his revulsion than erase the reflection of his only true mirror.

Will gasped, retreating from his full-blown empathy. The desire to possess, to own—the reason behind this whole masquerade—was so strong he channeled it from Hannibal. An all-consuming rush of desire shot through his already tingling spine. Now was his turn to wish for salvation, for himself, to yearn for it in the way Hannibal secretly did. He experienced through all five senses the violent way in which his friend—enemy—and killer—savior—had worked out this unique plan of his once he had learned of his illness. He experienced the incredulity, the regret, the pain, the rebellion—all of it. Hannibal's various states of mind over the last months flooded his brain in a succession of complex layers, all different in nature but similar in intensity. Hannibal had wanted to save Will, or more precisely, that part of Will he felt he couldn't leave without dying of boredom and loneliness.

"Do you feel it now, Will?" Hannibal's words were so warm against his cheek. Will felt his heart hesitate before picking up its beat again, fast and then faster.

The light in the maroon eyes had changed, the perspective had shifted. His former psychiatrist didn't want to cut and cook him anymore: he longed, yes, longed, to maintain his empathy alive, and while his body lived—this body, Will recalled before swallowing back the need to throw up—Hannibal would like very much to taste it, him, with his five senses, means that would let him alive until the very close day he should die.

"Oh my god…" Will wasn't sure he had said the words aloud, but as Hannibal's thumb moved south to his throat, pressing at the weak spot under his clavicle, he was well aware of how loud his gasp was in the room. He tried to slow down his breathing, but it had always been hard in such close quarters with this man.

"I believe I shall never tire of you, however unreasonable you may become, my dear Will."

"Was it reasonable to wish for a clone of me?"

"Why are you angry?" Hannibal inquired with a frown of disbelief. "I created the first embryo who shall grow ex-vitro in an artificial man's womb."

"Why am I angry?!" Will didn't even want to have this conversation. With any normal—sane—human being, he wouldn't need to. "Just… Ok, so let's get things straight: you cloned me for my empathy."

A smile played on Hannibal's lips. Will let out a scream of pain as Hannibal quickly set his thumb back into position.

"As I was saying, unreasonable. And as for your assumption, I must admit I expected a more accurate observation from you."

Will tried to focus on the conversation, but it was no easy task, his recently fixed thumb only one of many distractions. "You can't mean to say that-"

"But I do."

Will's jaw dropped open.

"Yes, William, I created an embryo out of our complementary sperms and one of Abigail's eggs. Now, don't struggle, please."

"You can't seriously expect me to lie still when you admit to have done such a…" Will trailed off, still fighting against his restraints. The need to bite was hovering on the edge of his wild mind.

"I kindly ask you to stay calm. And don't try to unhook the tube: it would be life-threatening for our unborn child, Will."

"You made me weak," Will protested, falling back unto the mattress, vanquished. Emptied.

"You were already weak when I brought you in. But you are right, I had to weaken your immune system so as to make you compatible with it."

"Him," Will corrected immediately. "Or her." It didn't matter that the… being next door should have been impossible, and had been created through so gross a process it made him more sick then most of his crime scenes put together. "It's a human being we are talking about."

Hannibal's satisfied smile showed Will that he had been manipulated into saying exactly that. If he had been free, broken thumb or not, he would have hit him. Repetitively.

"Now that I'm even weaker than before, I will die sooner," he said matter-of-factly, staring in any direction except Hannibal's. The need to hurt him was very strong, and the fact that he couldn't do anything about it only increased his anger. "Maybe if I wish cancer on myself, I will get it and be done with it."

"You don't have cancer, Will," Hannibal said calmly.

"I know what I don't have, thank you!" Will roared back.

He felt like smoke was exiting his every pore. Had he been able to disconnect himself from the tube, he would have, but something—the cuffs, he remembered—kept him accurately far away enough so that the being growing in the artificial placenta would be safe.

Will had barely the time to twist his head before he began to empty his stomach. Hannibal immediately held his shoulders, keeping him from puking on himself. From the corner of his eye, Will noticed that his damaged hand was back into its cuff, and he wanted to cry and scream and…

Then it happened again. A pain attack.

His whole body entered into convulsions. A cry of agony was wrenched from his chest and torn though his dried lips, followed by the gurgling of bile washing up. All of his limbs began to shake at once, and it wasn't merely the tremors of uncontrollable tension: it was pain animated, a torment brought forth by unbalance and continued tension. Hot tears were forced out of his rolling eyes as trails of blood ran down his nose and chin. Hannibal's hands on his shoulders only added to the excruciating ordeal with their controlling firmness.

"Please… I… please…" He was shaking so badly the cuffs were biting down on his wrists and ankles. "Please, Han… Han… ni…"

"I am here, Will. I won't leave you."

For some reason, the words only made him cry harder. By the time he was dry-heaving, but still trembling uncontrollably, he felt ready to snap in two.

"I can't… I can't…"

Hannibal's answer was to envelop him. His arms wound around his shoulders, he climbed on his knees on the mattress, touching Will with as much of his body as possible. Only his abnormal strength kept him from being ejected from the bed.

"I won't let you go," Hannibal said, in a voice that sounded a little bit breathless. "Trust me."

"I… can't!"

Will let out a loud growl. Before he could understand what was happening, he found himself pinned down to the bed, all of Hannibal's weight on top of him.

"I am your anchor, William. Haven't you understood that yet?"

The perfume filling his nostrils was nothing short of enthralling. Will continued to shake, but Hannibal's body and scent were effectively piercing through his pain attack. He gasped for air, lungs afire.

"I am… you…"

"I won't move until you are safe."

In his disoriented state, Will's thoughts were a mess of suppressed envies and urges. The intensity of this particular pain attack rendered the concept of reasonableness and unreasonableness even more confusing, to the point where he couldn't distinguish his wishes from Hannibal's and if they were wrong or right, inscribed in the past or the future…

He closed his mouth over Hannibal's carotid and sank his teeth in the smooth skin.

AN: The simultaneous proofreading of various OWs gives me enough work to drive me spare, but I do love Hannigram (the fact that 50% of my fics focus on this fandom is no coincidence), so I will try to update every week/two weeks. I hope you enjoyed the chapter… it only gets weirder and hotter, I promise! Next time: Hannibal did say he would take care of ‘all’ of Will’s needs, didn’t he?

Growth

The sharp pain of his abused thumb was nothing compared to the joy of tasting Hannibal's blood.

His whole focus had shifted to his mouth and throat, where the viscous and coppery life of his doctor swirled and coated every papilla of his mouth and every wall of his digestive system. Funny how the latter could function independently of the brain…

There was a moan, but Will was too absorbed in tasting to pinpoint its origin. He sucked and sucked and sucked, lips locked on the wound he had created. No water had ever tasted that good, and no coffee, even Hannibal's. He swallowed convulsively, revealing in the experience. He wanted more, he wanted…

The weight of a body on his increased his thirst like an accelerant. Ablaze and aroused in a way he hadn't experienced in a long time, Will brought their bodies even closer together. It was as though the proximity enhanced the taste, made it more potent, more vital. The next time a moan was heard, he knew it was his.

"William…"

Will began to convulse in the bed. What was happening? What had he just done? He felt so out of control, so out of himself, and the weight on him, the weight in him, above his heart and at the crook of his elbow, just made it worse.

"What… have… you done… to me?" he stuttered.

He could feel blood dribbling down his chin. There was a light in Hannibal's eyes that was neither anger nor impatience.

It was pride. And it was hunger too. Hannibal held Will's wrists in an iron grip as he ground his hips into his to force him to immobility.

It occurred to Will that they were both hard. Part of him wanted to throw up. Part of him wanted to grind some more. He forced himself still, and for some reason, it worked. He refused to believe that it was because of Hannibal's restraining presence.

"That was a very mild pain attack," Hannibal commented, releasing his wrists.

Will's eyes swiveled to the side, where the fetus was floating in its amniotic fluid, strangely beautiful in the artificial placenta a cannibal had designed for him. Or her. His insides twisted awkwardly.

"Must be… all the morphine."

Hannibal smiled indulgently at him, as if to say he ignored the truth on purpose, and that it was all right for now. With two precise strokes, he wiped the blood on his lips, then on his

chin. Will's eyes widened when the other man brought the digit up. For a moment, he thought that Hannibal was going to taste the blood, but to his surprise, he merely scented it, eyelids close as if to take as much information as possible on the very familiar fluid. Will's thoughts clashed against each other, burning out before they could form any coherence.

"I believe you need some rest, Will," Hannibal said almost gently. "I will be monitoring your sleep to make sure everything is all right."

'To make sure you don't try and escape again' was left unsaid. Will's breath caught. His eyes flickered to the incubator, then back to Hannibal. In one mad trick of his brain, both became one and the same. When he shook his head, they were two separate entities again.

"You planned this for a long time."

"I believe an heir would appeal to you."

Will's laugh was bitter. He wanted to ask so many questions: why Hannibal needed Will hooked to their unborn child, how he had gotten his sperm, which was disturbing enough, but not as much as the mystery of their surrogate daughter's contribution to the whole, and what was planned for the fetus once he or she reached maturity.

"Good night, Will."

"Wait, I…"

But his eyelids were already shutting: Hannibal was drugging him again. It didn't enrage Will as it used to. Maybe it was the drug's effect. Maybe it was habit. The explanation could also lie in human nature.

Before he fell asleep, Will quickly draw hypothesizes for his main interrogations.

His involvement in the fetus' development served one obvious purpose: placing Hannibal once again at the center of Will's life, this time through a double link that couldn't be easily severed. Although he didn't have any certainty concerning Hannibal's plans, he was pretty sure he was right. His empathy told him so. His experience confirmed it.

As for how Hannibal had acquired the necessary elements from him and—he winced—Abigail, Will could only hope that the latter hadn't been manipulated into the process. It was horrible, but still better than imagining Hannibal getting the eggs from an unconscious Abigail.

He was not too concerned about how Hannibal had gotten his sperm; the man had done so many things to his body without his consent that it wasn't traumatizing anymore, merely annoying. The ear in his throat. The nappies. The hand watching him. The soothing voice murmuring words in a language he could only guess was Lithuanian, stories he thought he understood while in limbo.

He wouldn't know what Hannibal wanted with the fetus before the man did what he wanted to do about him or her. Will decided that whatever happened, he now had a very specific

goal: getting this being to somewhere safe. There was the problem of his prisoner status, but more importantly, of his foreseeable bleak future. The doctors, after all, had said that they expected him to die within the year.

Then he would fight until his last breath. Nine months were shorter than a year.

OoO

The next weeks passed in a blur. In cuffs within four walls of the cleanest white ever painted, Will had ample time to think.

Sometimes, he wondered about things. Hannibal's neck, for example, began to fascinate him to the point of obsession. The fact that Hannibal had only disinfected the bite mark and hadn't bothered—or rather, very purposely decided against—hiding it, might play a role in how much time Will invested in looking at it, thinking about it, and recalling the feel of the flesh torn apart under his teeth.

And of course, Hannibal noticed, that and Will's interest for the embryo. Will didn't know if Hannibal knew that Will focused on the incubator, at least partly, to make sure Hannibal remarked it, but he would have done it regardless. The being growing in it, those tiny cells dividing, this human in becoming, he or she held a part of him, a socially awkward empath.

Eventually, Will also focused on people. He wondered if his dogs were doing all right, now that Alana might or might not be out of the hospital. Hannibal, in this grand scheme of his, refused to tell Will of the time that passed, but Will was scientist enough to figure an approximation from the rate at which the baby—their baby, his baby—grew at his fingertips. When he started to wonder if Alana and Jack believed he had simply left Wolf Trap for better horizons or were still looking for him, he estimated he had been kept between two months and two months and a half in this room.

In Hannibal's sole care. Treated to the most palatable food, the best tea in existence, medical-grade morphine, and probably quite a number of chemical fluids. Dependent on Hannibal for everything, from his daily toilette to his most basic needs.

Those basic needs evolved with time. At first, it was eating and sleeping and emptying his bladder. When it became clear to Will that Hannibal would never let him down on those aspects as long as he was hooked to the incubator, his life's direct goals moved upwards in his Maslow' pyramid.

Support. Affection. Hannibal offered it in his very personal way, in a warmth tainted with indifference that Will had began to cherish, for it was all he got here. His dogs weren't there. Nobody was there, except Hannibal, and the being they had both contributed to create.

And then affection blurred with sexuality. One morning, Will woke up panting, achingly hard and sweaty in the comfortable bed smelling like Hannibal. This very thought, the association between his captor's odor and his excitation, switched something in his mind that felt very much like shame. The only problem was that even this shame didn't balance his heightened state of arousal.

“Fuck,” he gasped, pulling on his handcuffs to distract himself with pain. “What’s wrong with me?”

“You need me.”

The smooth voice announced Hannibal in a way that didn’t help Will at all. He pulled harder at the links, focusing all the attention he could tear from its lower regions to the red lines forming on his wrists. At the corner of his eye, he saw the fetus floating peacefully in its manmade placenta.

“Hannibal, can you get out… of the room?” Will managed to choke.

The other man walked through the bed, indifferent to Will’s panicked expression. When he uncovered his erection, red overwhelmed the room: the blood oozing at Will’s wrists, the flush creeping up his neck and face, until the very roots of his hair, and the red of Hannibal’s tongue as it peeked through his teeth, brushing his lower lip.

“William. I told you I would take care of all your needs.”

“No!” Will was panicking, eyes darting from Hannibal’s face to his own groin with the look a doe might have in front of a car’s lights, or Abigail as Garett Jacob Hobbs wound an arm around her middle and brought the knife to her throat. “I don’t need… please go! What are you…”

Will trailed off as Hannibal lowered his head over the stretched silk of his pants and closed his eyes, drawing a deep breath. If Will had thought Hannibal changing his nappies was wrong, this was even worse, as it formed the last dimension of intimacy he had hoped to keep hidden.

Or was he only lying to himself?

“The nose’s ability to distinguish the most subtle notes is visceral for cooking,” Hannibal said in a deep, rich voice, Will had seldom heard. “And you offer so many varieties, my dear William.”

“I thought you didn’t want to eat me anymore.” Will tried to think, but Hannibal’s right hand inching closer to his still half-hard erection didn’t help the process. “What can I tell you to convince you to leave me some privacy? Hanni- ah!”

Without warming, Hannibal had wrapped his fingers around him through the silk and started a series of long, sensual strokes. Will’s eyes rolled in his head. This was madness. This was violation, but this—a hand going up and with firm pressure, squeezing around his head and brushing the slit, before going down again, in a rapid but measured pace—was also the precise way he touched himself. How Hannibal knew was beyond him. He didn’t try to fight him because he couldn’t, Hannibal had made sure of it, but he bit down on his tongue not to let a single noise escape. He wouldn’t give the other man this satisfaction.

“You are too hard on yourself, Will.” The way Hannibal said his name almost broke his resolution, but Will squeezed his eyes shut and grabbed the sheet with all his strength. “I

wanted to…" He brushed his nose against the silk fabric, taking in all of Will's arousal up his sensitive nostrils. "Ah… Bring you to orgasm myself for a long time. I've been wondering how you would smell then."

A groan was building up in Will's chest. Why was Hannibal doing this to him? What did he hope to accomplish that creating a living legacy out of their bodies didn't already achieve?

"You smell so good, William." Hannibal's hand moved faster, at the time Will himself would have begun to chance pace. It was impossibly accurate, which made it all the more arousing, and shameful in a submissive sort of way. "Your fear was bitter, your encephalitis acrid, but this…"

Before Will could react, Hannibal's hand snaked in the slit in his pants to grab at the hard flesh. He started to stroke him again so smoothly Will's breathing grew even more ragged. Maybe he was dreaming. It would be a weird fantasy, but as the pressure built and built in his lower belly, he couldn't bring himself to complain anymore, and then it wasn't just merely a hand on his cock, it was a mouth, Hannibal's mouth, sucking hard and fast, so deep it almost hurt, and Will couldn't stop himself from coming, in a mind-blowing orgasm that had him shout eight letters in a mixture of joy and surrender. For the few seconds that followed, as Hannibal raised his head, hot semen at the corner of his mouth and a feral look in his maroon eyes, Will's feelings shut down, vanquished by a dark, strong sense of possessiveness.

"Hannibal!"

AN: Next time is about an unexpected visit and a very confused Will. Ah, and the baby is growing! Let's cross our fingers for a nice Hannigram second part of S3 :)

Parting with Pain

"Are you feeling better, Will?"

That question, coming from a mouth lustrous with semen, had rendered Will another shade of speechless. He couldn't imagine what to answer to that, so he kept silent. Just remembering how to breathe proved a challenge, so to form complete thoughts deserving an echo in the audible world…

What had just happened?

OoO

A couple of months later, or some length of time on this scale, Will still juggled with the same question.

On a rational level, he knew what happened. It even had an official name: Stockholm Syndrome, or the innate ability to grow closer to one's captor to further one's own self preservation. If the hostages in Sweden's capital had come to the defense of their assailants, surely it wasn't so exceptional for him to develop some fondness for his captor? He was totally helpless in his cuffs, so how was he to take care of his most basic needs? And Hannibal *did* take care of him, when he wasn't drugging him to helplessness.

Except that sexual satisfaction—the terminology made him wince at times, but it was the shameful truth—wasn't theoretically a basic physiological imperative. Will had spent long nights awake trying to figure out why Hannibal had touched him. Stroke him. Pleasure him.

Hannibal wanted to bind Will to him, that much was sure. He wished to find back his decisive role in Will's life, which had been his motive behind creating a baby out of their mixed DNA. He even ensured the developing bond between his captive and the baby by forcing their proximity.

Where did sexuality fit in all that? Hannibal hadn't needed it to secure his position back in Will's life. Surely he had seen how Will had grown protective of the baby, and incidentally, more pliant in his surgeon's hands? It hadn't been strictly necessary to add a hand job to a winning recipe.

But Hannibal never did things halfway. He wanted Will bound to him in every fashion, or not at all. The order in which he had built up Will's dependence to him even made sense: first, he had answered his immediate physiological needs, after which he had started to provide him with more substantial conversation, and now, with a more sensual touch…

"Devil," Will whispered to the ceiling. He couldn't see it in the darkness, but he could make out its sharp outlines as easily as he now comprehended Hannibal's logic.

His obsessed and obsessive captor was inferring upwards on the whole of his personal Maslow's pyramid.

OoO

The visit didn't surprise him. There were very few things that still took him aback these days, if at all.

"Hello, Mr. Graham."

"Dr. Du Maurier."

Apparently, Hannibal's former psychiatrist was also immune to extravagance and improbabilities, for she doesn't even blink at the little life wonder all curled up on his or herself in the incubator.

Will turned his attention to the baby as well. A few months back, he had wanted to cut his link to the incubator, to unplug the vital tube that maintained the baby alive, but quite predictably, he had grown up a very protective streak that surpassed by far his fatherly side towards his dog. It was egoistical and materialistic, but this baby growing up at his side was really his: his blood, his flesh, his mind... He was a part of him. He would care for this little boy or girl; he would live and die for them.

As Bedelia Du Maurier brought a chair and sat down, it dawned on Will that his thinking was dangerously close to Hannibal's. Hadn't his captor—kidnapper, unorthodox and unofficial psychiatrist, murderer, and disturbing fascination—used the same words for him? That he cared for Will because he considered him 'a part of his own existence'? Will lifted the pillow in his back and sat up a little, as much as he could without tugging at his cuffs. He couldn't believe that he had needed so much time to figure out that Hannibal's ease in public was in fact a overdeveloped theory of mind and a total absence of emotional empathy—typical traits of a psychopath.

"Are you here at Hannibal's invitation?"

"Hannibal doesn't issue invitations, M. Graham."

Bedelia appeared as composed and sharp-minded as ever. She clasped her manicured hands on her lap and looked intently at him. As her eyes swept purposefully over the IV drop at his arm and the cuffs on his bruised wrists, Will let his perspective shift and his empathy work its toxic wonder.

Bedelia Du Maurier didn't feel any emotion close to surprise. She had known about his situation, Will discovered. She had come here because Hannibal had unique persuasive skills, and also because she had wanted to see Hannibal's fascination and weakness for herself...

Hannibal's fascination, Hannibal's weakness? Will gripped the sheets, breath hitching. He tried to convince himself that such knowledge was very good; it meant his captor was exploitable, didn't it? But things weren't as simple since Will had begun to be captivated by the other man as well. They were both each other's weakness.

Will shook the thought loose and shifted back to the tempest of his own head. "Why had he sent you, then?" he asked roughly.

Bedelia answered with another question.

"What can you tell me about those pain attacks?"

What had happened with them indeed? Will's grip on the sheets didn't relax. The last pain attack he had experienced was the one when he had ended up biting Hannibal, and that was...

"They have receded," he answered honestly.

"If we ignore your… environmental situation, would you say you are feeling better?

Will had to snort at that. As if his location and his interactions were separate entities! "He keeps me in an unhealthy healthy state, so I guess the answer would be yes."

"But you feel weak."

"Yes. Almost as if it serves some greater purpose."

The shadow of a smile played on Bedelia's lips. Will's eyes intercepted hers as they both turned towards the incubator. Without conscious thinking, he moved slightly to the right, towards the baby. He didn't believe Bedelia had been sent here to hurt either one of them, but he wouldn't put anything past Hannibal. As long as it served the greater purpose of binding Will to him...

"What about that illness that kept you at the hospital?" Bedelia asked evenly. Her eyes found his soon enough, as if the baby growing ex-vitro didn't hold any interest for her. But Will knew better: she sensed that her curiosity put his parental subself on alert, and she didn't want to make him uneasy, or rather, didn't want to fail whatever mission she had been entrusted with by Hannibal.

Will cleared his head of Bedelia's presence. Was his unknown, undetermined illness fading away, as she seemed to suspect, as he himself refused to ponder too long? The disappearance of the pain attacks was pointing towards a full recovery, but Will didn't want to consider it, had purposefully avoided drawing hypotheses about his improved health, because if he let himself believe that he was indebted to...

"You know what I believe, Mr. Graham?" Bedelia leaned over him. In Will's ears, the sound of expensive silk and linen rustling was deafening. For a moment, one of the perfectly manicured hand hovered over his still damaged thumb, then Bedelia crossed them together again on her lap. The woman hadn't survived her discovery of Hannibal's true self without a reason. "I believe you let yourself die out when Hannibal left America," she said suddenly. "I believe you truly were sick, but not of some fatal and unlabeled disease."

"You are saying that Hannibal's return cured me." The words chocked Will. He was breathing faster now, awaiting the full impact of the truth with the same frightened anticipation he would have apprehended the collision of a truck rushing full speed towards him.

"I am saying that Hannibal gave you a reason to live."

"I can't let the baby in his hands!" Will tugged at his cuffs and revered in the acute pain. There was not much that would drive him to full-blown rage these days, but a direct threat to the life growing alongside him… "He had already killed Abigail, and I won't-"

"She wasn't you." Bedelia stood up, back straight and chin high, but there was no condescendence in her tone, or superiority in her stand. She was shielding, Will felt, because whatever she experienced was too strong an emotion to embrace. "This baby is closer to Hannibal in a way that makes killing impossible. I can assure you he or she will be cherished."

"You can't know that for sure."

Bedelia headed towards the stairs.

"You can't know it!"

Panic. Rage. Hope. The tidal wave of conflicting emotions crushed Will. He panted and tugged and screamed until the tears of frustration dried on his face.

OoO

Hannibal was sitting at his side with a fresh cup of tea. He had donned a black suit, complete with a black shirt. The only color aside the red hue of his eyes and lips was the strong scarlet of his tie.

Will's fingers shook as he reached for the mug. Hannibal helped him secure it without a comment. Will's eyes fluttered a moment to the incubator. Him or her. A vulnerable being to protect. Tears stormed their way upwards in Will's throat, but he fought them down; he had cried enough yesterday.

"You said you couldn't cure me," he said between two swallows of the hot green tea.

"I meant that you had to come back to health through your own means, my dear William." Hannibal laid a palm on Will's cheek, and Will let him. He would let him do everything, except take this child away from him.

Once the cup was empty, it was time for his ablutions. Will let his mind wander between webs of questioning as the deft fingers at his waist followed their usual path.

"Did you know what it entailed, coming back to me?" he blurted out.

"That my presence would help you?" Hannibal didn't smile, none of his features shifted, but Will could swear light shone from under the alabaster of his skin. The raw joy of his captor tasted sweet on his tongue. He let it seep in him, just a little. "I didn't know for sure, but I suspected you needed me."

"You made sure a long time ago that I would."

Hannibal moved back the silk sheets up his chest. Will stopped his hands at his belly, right above the scar mark. Hannibal's fingers twitched. Will ached for more than a brush of hands,

but he held on his righteous anger. No matter how compelled he felt to trust Hannibal, he couldn't let the rage go just yet. What Bedelia had forced him to acknowledge placed him at the non-return point of their trust-or-kill relationship.

For if he trusted the man that had killed Abigail with another common child, his life would belong to him. How could it not, when it had been saved by the very one who had destroyed it?

"I need to run some test," Hannibal whispered, tracing his scar delicately. "I will be back soon."

AN: Hey Fannibals! The new full-time job is cannibalizing away a lot of writing time, but I did my best. Hope you enjoyed the week's revelations. Next time: what sort of test Hannibal had to run, some sex… and the baby will come out of the incubator!

The Birth

Will didn't need a calendar to estimate that at least six months had passed since his arrival in the white room.

Quite unexpectedly, Hannibal corrected his assumption. "It had been precisely seven months today."

"You give long-term care, Hannibal," Will replied in a light tone. Honest. Curious.

"Only to the two of you, Will."

He had received an earthy breakfast: scrambled eggs with meat, in a similar presentation to that first meal they had shared together, before Garett Jacob Hobbs had killed his daughter, and their future attempt at a family.

He plunged his plastic fork into the hot food and took his time savoring it. This was a lazy morning, or at least a lazy time of the day, as Hannibal wasn't busy elsewhere, but there at his bedside, languidly stroking his arm in a flashing burgundy suit.

Hannibal gave you a reason to live, Bedelia had said.

Hannibal had been spending more and more time with him since the woman's visit. Will didn't question his actions anymore, because he would only end up accepting them, accepting *him*… and he couldn't trust Hannibal implicitly, because a burgeoning life depended on his resolve. It didn't matter the insurances Bedelia had given him: Hannibal had already killed a daughter too many.

"What is on your mind, William?"

Hannibal's tone was something dark and provocative. Will swallowed hard; now wasn't the time to shy away from his responsibilities to his baby.

Theirs.

"Nothing."

No troubling thought should be voiced. He lifted a hand and placed it on Hannibal's questing hand.

"But I'm happy you are here."

"And so am I."

The rich baritone, as always slightly more accented when Hannibal was aroused, uncoiled need in Will's belly. His left leg twitched. Hannibal had freed both his ankles a few days ago, which allowed Will to use his new leverage to bring the other man closer to him. He wasn't thinking about his planned betrayal when he brought his lips to Hannibal, nor was he

considering the details of his escape when a deft hand snaked between their bodies to close around him and own. Squeeze.

“Hannibal…”

Will screwed his eyes close. The other man was kissing the stubble along his jawline, his chest flush against his. The sensation of his hand, separated from his cock by a very thin and expensive layer of silk, was excruciatingly good. Guilt welled up in Will, but instead of tampering lust, it enhanced it. His wanton moan was swallowed whole by Hannibal.

“So beautiful in my hands, Will, so beautiful…” Hannibal’s chest was raising and falling rapidly. Will tried to reach the other man’s pants, but the cuffs at his wrists forbid him. Hannibal placed the plate of scrambled eggs on the floor before Will made a mess of himself. Will only fought harder, forgetting for an instant to take care of his still fragile thumb for later.

“Let me touch you,” he pleaded. Everything to feel close to that man. Everything to forget how wrong it was. He was craving this intimacy, and habit had made it impossible for him to feel ashamed.

“Don’t be impatient, Will.” Hannibal’s hand had disappeared under the waistband of the silky pants. His chiding tone was sensual, like the heady rhythm he had imposed to the strokes, seemingly designed to drive Will more insane than ever before.

“Please…”

But Hannibal refused to grant Will’s wish. As he sank to his knees and pulled Will’s engorged cock free from his pants, brought it to his mouth and parted his lips, Will felt tears threatening to break free on his cheeks—tears of sorrow.

He had needed Hannibal to live, and he still needed him. It was so paradoxical to his need to protect the baby that he feared he would lose his mind, again, but he had lived with heavy contradictions before. Surely he could do it again?

“Hmm…”

Hannibal brushed the scar on his belly as he mouthed around the base of his shaft. Will watched his throat fight the intrusion, ready to burst at the mere sight. Hannibal looked about to loose it too, although he was fixing the pink outline of his knife work, not Will’s throat or face. The look in his blow-up pupils whenever he eyed the scar was more akin to love then satisfaction, and right now, it was mingled with a strong amount of unadulterated lust.

The man’s obsession with his scar used to make Will sick. Not anymore. His need for privacy had passed too, but as Hannibal worked him up with his tongues and lips, bringing him to orgasm in no time at all, Will doubted that such *want* would ever fade.

OoO

The baby was growing so fast.

No, not the baby; the little girl. Hannibal announced the news to him after dinner. “Do you want to choose the name?”

Will declined, preferring to wait for the baby’s birth. But he had had questions he wanted answered.

“You never told me how you got my sperm and one of Abigail’s… eggs.”

Hannibal’s eyes shone in pleasure at his unease. Will’s answer was to snort and look away, neck flushed.

“Will… Surely, as a man of medicine, and as a man simply, you know how I can do that.”

“There are many options,” Will replied wryly, not sure anymore that he wanted his suspicions confirmed. “But I don’t see how-”

“I stimulated your prostate while you were asleep, the night you came to my house to kill Gideon,” Hannibal replied in an almost bored tone, as if reciting the names of the rude people he had killed over the last several months.

Will breathed out through his nose, forcing himself to calm down. He didn’t fear a panic attack: ever since his subconscious had understood that Hannibal would never leave him again, this traitorous part of his mind had stopped the attacks. But it was a challenge dealing with Hannibal’s manipulative forwardness.

“Did you already suspect I would turn on you at that time, when I had my seizure?”

“You did,” Hannibal replied sternly, and Will had a hard time deciphering the real emotion behind the impassible mask. “But I’m not worried anymore.”

They locked gazes. Will decided it was time he asked, even if he already suspected the answer.

“If you know that, then you can free my wrists.

“Soon.”

Hannibal rose and gave Will his plate back. The other man had to try twice before he managed to pick up his fork.

“You didn’t tell me how you… how Abigail…”

“It was her idea.”

Will stared at the minuscule limbs of the little girl in the incubator. This was the Abigail he never got to keep, the family he wanted to cherish, a gift and a poison in the same innocent being made of the most impossible persons ever.

It distressed him, this speed of life. He wanted to enjoy every moment of the baby’s growth, because soon they would have to leave.

Soon they would flee.

OoO

Hannibal had started to read to Will during the last month of their common ex-vitro pregnancy. A part of Will wondered if Hannibal was carefully selecting what kind of information got into his mind or if the other man was merely climbing up higher in his Maslow's pyramid, satisfying his intellectual needs after his physical ones. But Will didn't ask. He suspected it was a mixture of the two, and for their greater schemes at antipodes, it wasn't relevant.

Will started to get nervous, and the more the expected time of birth approached, the more nervous he became. Every night when Hannibal touched him, he relaxed a bit, only to get worked up all over again and hurting his wrists and pulling on his links, purposefully. He *had* to remember why he still existed, and that was easy, one he cleansed Hannibal from his mind: he *had* to get the baby to safety.

So he hurt himself, and every morning, Hannibal applied expensive cream to his wrists, without comment. He also took great care to monitor his state. The diagnostic: Will was still weak, and as they both knew, there was no more panic attack. More important yet: he wasn't dying anymore.

That was a good new because that meant Will could bring the baby to safety.

And it was bad news because that meant he definitively owed his life to Hannibal.

But Will was stronger than that. He had too, for the baby.

OoO

"Hannibal… Hannibal!"

The door crashed open as the man rushed into the room, hurrying towards Will, who was shaking uncontrollably. He grabbed his chin with a blood-stained hand—a part of Will's mind recognized Hannibal's state for what it was, and stopped to swirl—and lifted his head, forcing their gazes to lock. Will stopped to shake almost at once.

It was now. It was time. He forced the words past his lips. They felt like needles on the way up his dried throat.

"It's the… It's the baby." His brow and neck were flush, covered in sweat. Part truth, part comedy. "I think she… she…"

"Yes." Hannibal's eyes snapped to the incubator. "She is coming. Do you see?"

"Yes." This time, it was Will who spoke, and he, too, who acted.

His healing thumb snapped as it was jerked out of the handcuff. Before Hannibal could comprehend what was really going on in the mind he so attentively attempted to craft, Will

had unhooked the IV link in the crook of his arm and struck him in the chest, right above the heart.

It would not kill him. It would not, definitively not. And they were both used to scar.

Hannibal fell backwards towards the incubator. The fragile glass containing the baby shattered in a thousand screams.

“Noooooo!”

Will jerked forward. He broke his second thumb without thinking, without caring, and jumped on the floor. It was only chance that had the baby’s fall crossing his own desperate path. He was crying and shaking as he caught the little girl, gliding in amniotic liquid and covered in the blood of Hannibal’s most healthy victims.

The little girl was so beautiful. She had Hannibal’s features, Abigail’s eyes, and…

“Will…”

Hannibal was lying in a sea of glass, his dark suit sparkled with transparent shards that pierced him everywhere. There were two parallel lines on his right cheek, red and flowing, perpendicular to the needle protuberating from his chest. His eyes were liquid, so dark and full or intent, that Will swayed as he rose, hypnotized by the value of their depths. This was how fragile their trust was, how tragic their truce had been and continued to be. Will ached to touch him, to cry and to scream, so he only held their little girl tighter to his chest. The teacup had come together again, and this time, it would remain fixed.

“You can’t keep her from me.”

Will took one step back, then another. He sensed the words Hannibal really meant, and it terrified him, because the other man was right.

You can’t keep yourself from me. You are mine.

“I need to go,” he said in a rush, chest pounding frantically. “I need to protect her.”

Hannibal smiled. As Will hurried up the stairs he had only seen for the past eight and a half months, he felt that smile tear right through his chest, ripping his heart to shreds.

NA: Next time comes the final chapter of the story! Thank you for keeping up with my slow updates and letting such positive comments after your reading! Tonight/tomorrow: last episode of S3 is coming out. This is going to be one hell of a show…

Will Reborn

The taste of everything he had ever eaten blurred in acid panic.

Run!

That was his only thought as he climbed up the stairs, higher and higher towards the black door. The handle was so close he could taste its metal on his tongue. A tempest of pain and confusion, ignoring the agony of his two broken thumbs, he pushed open the door, the little girl shielded against his chest.

“It will be alright,” he whispered to the too-still baby. She was covered in blood, as if her life cycle had already reached its end. “Don’t be afraid.” He was panting, looking at the blue eyes so incredibly pure. “I will…”

Whatever his promise was to be, it was never worded, for Will had just seen the room above his prison.

It was so familiar and yet so alien. It had been such a long time since his admission at the hospital, when the pain attacks had started, that he had almost forgotten how it actually looked.

He was standing in his own living room.

“I must admit I counted on your surprise, shall you flee in spite of everything.”

Will’s shock was plain on his face as he turned around. The little girl in his arms started to cry, as if sensing how upset he was, which had to be what Hannibal had wanted in the first place for him, for both of them: a little empath with a manipulative streak.

“We have to wash her,” Hannibal said in a reasonable tone, seemingly unaware of the steady flow of blood that fell down his shirt. He had a white cloth in one hand, wet with water.

Will took a step backwards.

“Don’t move,” he said, voice shaking. “Don’t you fucking move, Hannibal.”

“After all that happened, you will deny me?”

Furor gave strength to the man’s voice and stance. He seemed to grow in front of a wide-eyed Will, to expand towards endless strength until all the air in the room was replaced by the maroon eyes and the parted lips—by the very face of his dreams and nightmares, and his only life. In truth, there were still several meters between them, but Will felt Hannibal's hands, stained with his own blood, fan on his shoulders. He recoiled, and then remembered who exactly was in his hands, just born, and he steeled himself to resist. He would run, now, any minute...

“Don’t-”

But Hannibal was so *fast*. It shouldn’t have surprised Will, because the needle really had been small, plus Hannibal hadn’t spent eight months in bed.

His knees hit the ground, unable to support his weight a moment longer. Will let out a startled cry, panicked at the perspective of hurting the still howling girl, but Hannibal didn't use his superior speed to hurt the baby, or even him.

Why didn't he? He had proved that he could, and would punish Will for any betrayal.

"Your eyes are full of fear," Hannibal crooned in his ear, his voice a little tight from the pain. He had Will's shoulders in his strong arms, and the baby settled between their heaving chests.

Will stared down at the little girl. As soon as Hannibal had touched her, she had stopped screaming. She still squirmed between them, obviously uncomfortable, but who wouldn't be in her unusual situation?

She was just born, as were they.

"You are damn right." Will's voice was raw with the fear Hannibal so easily perceived. "Are you happy, now?"

Hannibal sank his nails in his shoulders. Will shuddered in discomfort but didn't fight him. "You are talking as if our relationship hasn't evolved over the last eight months," Hannibal said in an icy tone. "You claim I enjoy your fear; I don't. The only thing I like about this situation is the birth of our girl, and the freedom you've granted yourself."

"The freedom to flee?"

Hannibal tsked. "May I take care of our daughter, Will?"

The words electrified Will; he was so astonished at the truth of Hannibal's devotion, plain in his face and voice to grasp, that he relinquished his treasure at once.

"I will be back soon.

OoO

Every fiber in Will's body ordered him to run after Hannibal, but his legs wouldn't even grant him this one favor. With no adrenaline left to help him along, he started to crawl after Hannibal.

The other man had gone upstairs. From the first step of the staircase, Will could hear water running. It calmed him immediately: Hannibal didn't drown his victims; it wasn't part of the Chesapeake Ripper MO.

The water stopped. Heart beating at the combined speed of both worry and elation, Will found Hannibal waiting on the last step.

"The things you do for the ones you love never cease to amaze me," Hannibal said in clear affection.

Will snorted. "I don't have a lot of leverage, so there is no need to be amazed."

Without warning, Hannibal scooped him up in his arms, grunting as he did so. Will automatically wound his arms around the other man's neck and started to wonder if he had hit anything vital with the needle.

"I meant your willingness to stay in that bed for eight months." Hannibal's voice was warm. His eyes had lit up. He carried Will all the way down the corridor to the last door, the master's bedroom.

"We will go back to our daughter in a moment, if you please. Bedelia is with her in your bathroom, giving her milk. I am quite pleased that our daughter warmed up to her so instantly."

Will shivered in Hannibal's arms.

"I didn't stay in that bed willingly, you know."

"Of course you did. On a subconscious level at least. If you really had wanted to escape, you would have looked under your pillow."

Will opened his mouth, too shocked to talk but ready to burst with unsaid words.

"Yes, Will. All this time, there was a key there. You only had to look, had you wanted to escape. But you didn't."

OoO

Those words played back a thousand times in Will's mind as Hannibal undressed him. He didn't protest, and not only because he was used to it, now; his thumbs, both broken, were now hurting him fully.

"How is the wound?"

"Nothing that I can't take care of by myself," Hannibal replied calmly, tending to Will's thumbs. "It will hurt only a moment."

Will cried out during the whole process of fixing back the bones. A single tear rolled down his cheek.

"It's not pain," he found himself explaining as Hannibal reached for the pristine water near his jawline. "It's..."

"Relief."

"Yes."

Hannibal's eyes gleamed. "Will you look into my eyes, Will, and know what I want?"

In all his vulnerability, Will had never felt safer. He could hear his daughter, their daughter in the next room, and Bedelia's voice. He had just spent eight months hidden in his own basement, apparently by his own volition, for his devotion... If he had indeed ignored the key, then he didn't have the right to shy away from Hannibal now.

For the first time in their common life, Will let down all the barriers in his head. His empathy surged forth from behind its fragile fortress and flew right through Hannibal's eyes.

"Do you see, Will?" Hannibal whispered, and it seemed as though the words were said in his own head. They were on their knees facing each other on the bed, so close. "Do you see me?"

"Yes." Will's voice was dazed, a rich purr. He was defenseless, naked from the inside out, and it felt wonderful. After so many months of doubting, he finally got to see who Hannibal really was.

The other man existed for him, only for him. Will found was he had come to suspect, and now knew: Hannibal cared about him because he considered they were two halves of one unique self. Desire in lust form was unusual for him, but what he experienced with Will was genuine, and powerful. The avalanche of heat Will sensed through their link, combined with his own, tore a moan from his lips.

The connection between them didn't falter.

"Look, Will. Look deeper."

"Hannibal..." Each syllable was detached, stark with enchantment.

And Will looked deeper. He let himself fall into the extraordinarily complex and rational maze of this mind palace, forsaking the remnants of his own mental security with no hesitation. What had he to fear? Hannibal was right: Will had allowed himself to be manipulated. He had wanted Hannibal to take over and set up order into his chaotic existence. His wish to belong had eclipsed his morality, but Will couldn't bring himself to regret it.

Not when the shattered teacup was finally coming together again.

"Bedelia was right," he whispered, spellbound by the maroon irises getting smaller by the second, conquered by the black pupils. "You could never kill this baby."

"I make amends my own way," Hannibal replied softly, cupping his chin and pressing with his thumb under the bone of his jaw.

"You wanted me to conquer my fear of madness."

Hannibal didn't answer; he brought his lips to Will's instead, brushing them with stunning tenderness.

Will had to close his eyes. Hadn't he wanted that, a friendship, a... relationship, that he had chosen himself over billions of other parallel futures, without masks and half-lies like one

with Alana would have required, like his job for the FBI with Jack had been, always on the edge, always doubting himself? With Hannibal... They were both raw and born to belong.

"I've wanted you for so long, Will, all of you. But for that, you had to live."

"You made sure I would."

"I repaired the teacup."

Will smiled, blinking away tears of awe. He spoke against Hannibal's lips, gripping the other man's arms for support. He wanted to touch him everywhere, to claim this man who had changed him, healed him.

"We did."

"It was our last chance." Hannibal's voice had turned to a growl.

Will flicked open the first button on Hannibal's stained shirt in spite of the pain in his thumbs. The second button broke. "Yes. It was either succumbing to incompatibility, or trapping ourselves into one mindset."

"Do you feel trapped?" There was only mild curiosity in Hannibal's voice—one last test.

Will pressed a hand to feel the beating heart under the alabaster torso. Could Hannibal sense his own running heart through this link? His nostrils flared, turning his aristocratic features into predatory hunger.

"Yes," Will said, stomach in delirious knots. "But it feels right."

"Does that feel right, too?"

Hannibal had closed the remaining distance between them and caught his bottom lips between his teeth, licking it, sucking on it, with clear appetite. His hand shot between their bodies to close over his shaft. Will fought to stifle a loud groan, but to no avail; he was so hard it hurt.

Hannibal had always been the exception.

"Yes." Will's voice was breathy. “Yes, you are so… oh, *fuck*!”

Hannibal’s thumb had brushed his slit, already gleaming with precum. Without warning, he pushed Will on his back and engulfed the bulging head in one smooth glide. It was not the first time that Hannibal pleasured him this way, but every time was like the first, for it felt so incredibly *good.* The other man’s tongue was sharp when he spoke, but so agile when he sucked. Will clutched the sheets and bit down his lip.

“You made your way into my home,” he panted, “just as you are… ah!”

Hannibal had moved his exquisite torture past Will’s balls, farther back, after the very sensitive stretch of skin. When he traced the outline of his hole with the tip of his tongue,

Will's eyes rolled in his head. A shaky laugh fell from his lips.

"What are you…"

He couldn't quite finish the question as the most incredible feeling rushed through him. Hannibal had just slid his tongue inside him, seducing the thigh muscles into pliancy. He mapped him from the inside, sucking and licking everything Will had to offer. The point of his nails scraped Will's lower back as the other man rutted quite uncontrollably against his face. Nonsensical with bliss, Will could only gasp and pant and moan.

"Will you… Oh, please, Hanni…"

Will didn't need to explain any further; Hannibal licked his lips and rose from between trembling legs, eyes completely black. Heat chocked Will.

"You will never try to die again," Hannibal said in a rough voice, parting his legs and freeing his own hard member. "I won't let you."

"I am yours."

Hannibal grunted in approval. Will wanted to fear this length brushing his hole, because fear could act as an aphrodisiac, and Hannibal hadn't used lube, only his own saliva, but the emotion evaded him. Will began to breath faster.

"It will hurt," he whispered, more a statement than a question.

"It will also hurt the first time you fuck me."

On those unexpectedly arousing words, Hannibal pushed into him.

"Fuck!" Will hissed.

Hannibal was fully sheathed into him, so big—an instrument of completion. Will arched his back, making the beads of sweat rolling faster down his shoulders and spine, to pool at the edge of his buttocks. Hannibal's fingers kneaded the flesh tracing his hips, possessed it. He began to pull himself out, painful inch by painful inch, and Will couldn't feel the hurt, only the loss to come.

"Don't…"

"I'm not going anywhere," Hannibal reassured him.

And he didn't; he fucked Will to mind-loss and self-forgetness, he *claimed* him, and Will could only moan and beg for more. He had dismissed everything, from Jack's and Alana's current whereabouts to the taste of bad coffee and the diagnostic received at the hospital. This was not his world anymore.

"Hannibal!"

Blood erupted in his mouth as his teeth broke the skin on one powerful shoulder. His vision sizzled in an array of stars.

Mine. Four letters thick with lust and love.

OoO

Freshly bathed and content, the two men lay side by side in the bed of Wolf's Trap. A dozen dogs decorated the floor, some splayed on the carpet, other eyeing the bed with careful consideration. None moved, only too aware of the wondrous instant playing amongst the red sheets.

Will sighed in happiness. He couldn't recall having seen Hannibal so serene before, so naked like himself, open to read and devour. It was what happened when one gave himself to another being: vulnerability, openness. Trust. It was total surrender.

"Now that she is born, how do you wish to call her, Will?"

Will smiled. The little girl, clean and asleep, was curled on her side between the two of them, a tiny fist extended towards Hannibal, her face against Will's shoulder.

"I believe there is only one name she could ever bear."

Hannibal cupped his chin and laid a soft but possessive kiss on his lips.

"Making amends takes time."

"So does trust," Will replied, confident in a new, comfortable way. "But we have now."

THE END

AN: Thanks to everyone who has followed this story through its roller-coaster updating. The idea had been in my head for a long time and I just had to put it into writing, even though I don't have much time. I hope you enjoyed the story, and my poetic style. Back to my Hannigram Post-season 3 story as soon as… well… I get the time :P

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!